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Man in the image of God in the image of the times: Sufi self-narratives and the diary of Niyāzī-i Mıṣrī (1618-94)*

Sufi writers through the centuries have stated time and again the illusory nature of the self and expressed a desire to go beyond that illusion to attain a taste of divine reality. The Sufi martyr Maṣṣūr al-Ḥallāj (d. 922) expressed this with the words: "Between you and me there lingers an 'It is I' that torments me/In grace to me, take this 'I' from between us!" (') Junayd (d. 910), a mystic known for his sobriety, explained more prosaically: "Sufism means that God makes you die to yourself and makes you alive in Him." (") The eminent Orientalist Gustave von Grunebaum no doubt had statements like these in mind when he argued that the "depersonalized" character of medieval Islamic literature was due, in significant measure, to the high value Muslims placed on the mystical ideal of self-annihilation in the divine. (")

This statement by Grunebaum, nevertheless, does not stand up to scrutiny. As recent studies have made clear, there was a rich corpus of personal literature in Arabic since the ninth century, and in Turkish since the sixteenth century. (") Moreover, in both languages, Sufi writers played a lea-

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1. Cited in John Alden Williams, *The Word of Islam* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994); for the Arabic text, see *Kitāb al-Tawāsin*, ed. Louis Massignon (Paris, 1913), 25.

2. Margaret Smith, trans., *Readings from the Mystics of Islam* (London: Luzac, 1972), 34.

3. Gustave E. von Grunebaum, *Medieval Islam*, 2nd ed. (Chicago, 1953), 221-293.

4. The classic essay on Arabic autobiography is Franz Rosenthal, "Die Arabische Autobiographie," *Studia Arabica*, 1 (1939): 1-40; for the most recent collaborative study of the genre, see the Special Issue on Arabic Autobiography, ed. D.F. Reynolds in *Edebiyât*, 7 (1997) and *Interpreting the Self: Autobiography in the Arabic Literary Tradition*, ed. D.F. Reynolds (Berkeley, L.A. and London: University of California Press, 2001). For the autobiographies of the Mughal rulers, see Stephen Frederick Dale, "Steppe Humanism: The Autobiographical Writings of Zahir al-Din Muhammad Babur, 1483-1530," *JMES* 22 (1990): 37-58. For a survey of Ottoman first-person literature before the nineteenth century, see Cemal Kafadar, "Self and Others: The Diary of a Dervish in Seventeenth-Century Istanbul and First Person Narratives in Ottoman Literature," *SI* 59 (1989): 121-150 and Suraiya Faroqhi, *Subjects of the Sultan: Culture and Daily Life in the Ottoman Empire* (London and N.Y.: I.B. Tauris, 2000), 194-203.

ding role as self-narrators, leaving highly personalized records of their experiences both as part of larger works and as texts in their own right. It is true that these writers were not guided by anything like the modern notion of individualism, but neither were the Catholic and Protestant pious who authored a large chunk of the first-person literature in medieval and early modern Europe. ⁽⁵⁾ In fact, one of the most important contributions of the scholarship of the last twenty years on self and self-writing has been to debunk the myth of the autonomous, individualized self as a universal reality, and to come to terms with the multiplicity of ways people have represented themselves across boundaries of culture, gender and social class. Interestingly, some of the poststructuralist theories have also come close to Sufi (and generally religio-mystical) teachings in drawing attention to the illusory nature of the self. ⁽⁶⁾

What is missing or is not sufficiently stressed in all this, however, is the historicity of first-person writing outside of the geography labeled "the West." Whereas countless studies have been devoted to the changing modes of self-representation in medieval, early modern and modern Europe, it is still generally assumed that "non-Western" traditions of first-person writing, if they existed at all, did not change appreciably before the advent of "modernity."

This is true even of the otherwise admirable study, *Interpreting the Self: Autobiography in the Arabic Literary Tradition*, which discusses Arabic autobiography from the ninth to the early twentieth century as one coherent whole.

Ahistorical, essentialist approaches are even more prevalent in the secondary literature on Sufism. Historians might study the social, political and economic dimensions of the Sufi orders, but rarely examine the ideas expressed in Sufi writings. The philologists and scholars of religion who do study Sufi texts, on the other hand, tend to eschew historical contextualization and privilege explicating these texts in their own terms, that is phenomenologically. ⁽⁷⁾ It is admittedly no easy task to tease out the historical ele-

5. For a sampling of the studies that reappraise the question of individualism in early modern European autobiography, see T.C. Heller, M. Sosna and D.E. Wellbery, eds., *Reconstructing Individualism: Autonomy, Individuality, and the Self in Western Thought* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986); P. Coleman, J. Lewis and J. Kowalik, eds.: *Representations of the Self from the Renaissance to Romanticism*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) and Michael Mascuch, *Origins of the Individualist Self: Autobiography and Self-Identity in England, 1591-1791* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996).

6. For an insightful discussion of Lacanian and Sufi notions of the self, see Katherine Pratt Ewing, *Arguing Sainthood: Modernity, Psychoanalysis and Islam*, (Durham and London: Duke University, 1997), esp. 1-37, 253-267 and "The Illusion of Wholeness: Culture, Self, and the Experience of Inconsistency," *Ethos* 18 (1990a): 251-78. For an exploration of "the subject" in Ottoman court poetry from the "post-Lacanian" perspective of Guattari and Deleuze, see Walter G. Andrews, "Singing the Alienated 'I': Guattari, Deleuze and Lyrical Decodings of the Subject in Ottoman Divan Poetry," *The Yale Journal of Criticism* 6, 2 (1993): 191-219.

7. This trend, nevertheless, may be changing. Two recent studies that help bridge the disciplinary gap mentioned above are Carl Ernst, *Eternal Garden: Mysticism, History and Politics at a South Asian Sufi Center* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992) and Vincent J. Cornell, *Realm of the Saint: Power and Authority in Moroccan Sufism* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998).

ments in texts that strive to express timeless truths, but this problem applies much less to Sufi life-writings in general and hardly at all to Sufi life-writings after the fifteenth century, in which historically contingent elements are abundant. It is, however, only in the last decade or so that scholars have begun to analyze Sufi life-writings as narratives (instead of simply mining them for individual pieces of information). Moreover, the studies undertaken so far have concerned themselves mostly with texts written before the fifteenth century or with texts written in the Maghrib, while the rich Sufi auto/biographical and hagiographical literature written in the Ottoman lands has remained relatively little explored. ⁽⁸⁾

Ottoman Sufi first-person literature presents an advantageous point from which to examine the question of continuity and change in the modes of self-representation in use in Near Eastern Islamic societies from the medieval to the early modern era. Sufism, after all, was a set of teachings and practices that predated Ottoman rule by nearly five centuries, but also played a major role in Ottoman society and culture. Hence it would only be reasonable to expect a great degree of commonground between the Ottoman and pre-Ottoman practitioners of Sufism. At the same time, nevertheless, the social and political realities that framed the lives of Ottoman Sufis were considerably different from that of their predecessors. By the sixteenth century, the Ottoman state had established itself as the single most important powerholder in the eastern Mediterranean. Even if the Ottomans relied on a whole coterie of intermediary bodies to rule over a diverse population in a vast stretch of land, they nevertheless had assembled an administrative mechanism that was far more ambitious and resilient than that of any other Islamic polity previously. While the Ottoman ruling elite paid more than lipservice to the shariah, under their rule politics dictated religion more than ever in the Near East. In comparison with the medieval period, different social and professional groups – not only the ulema, but also the artisans, the Janissaries, and the Sufis – formed more close-knit associations, especially after the sixteenth century. All these developments, furthermore, were fuelled in part by changes in other parts of the world. While the people at the time may not have been quite aware of this, they lived in a period in which the different regions of the world became more closely interconnected and the pace of life became quicker.

How did all these developments affect the ways practitioners of Sufism represented themselves and their life experiences in writing? The following discussion attempts a preliminary answer to this question by exploring the historicity of the modes of self-representation used by Ottoman Sufi writers

8. In addition to the works cited in note 7, see *Saints orientaux*, ed. Denise Aigle (Damascus and Paris: IFEAD, 1995); Jawid A. Mojaddedi, *The Biographical Tradition in Sufism: The ṭabaqāt genre from al-Sulamī to Jāmī* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2001), and *Le saint et son milieu, ou comment lire les sources hagiographiques*, ed. Rachida Chih and Denis Gril, *Cahier des annales islamologiques* 19 (2000), and A.Y. Ocak, *Kültür Tarihi Kaynağı Olarak Menakıbnameler (Metodolojik bir Yaklaşım)* (Ankara: TTK, 1992). For the secondary literature on Sufi first-person literature written outside of Ottoman lands, see footnote 25.

in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The first part of this paper takes a broad overview of the Sufi first-person literature, the beliefs and practices, the literary conventions and innovations that gave it its distinctive shape. It also highlights some of the new developments that set Ottoman Sufi self-narratives apart from the earlier Sufi first-person literature. The second part, then, explores some of these new trends through a contextual and intertextual study of the diary of the Ottoman Sufi Mehmed el-Niyâzi el-Mıṣrî (1618-1694). This is a text that is at once deeply beholden to the earlier Sufi first-person literature and exhibits some novel features. These novel features, it is argued, had much to do with the particulars of Mıṣrî's personal experiences, but also (and perhaps more importantly) reflect a number of broader shifts in Ottoman social, political and cultural institutions in the early modern period.

Fashioning the self in Sufi first-person narratives

It is no accident that a large majority of the people who authored first-person writings in the Ottoman Empire in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were practitioners of Sufism. There were many factors that made Sufi practitioners more likely to pen self-narratives than others. First and foremost would be their access to the written word. In the central lands of the Ottoman Empire, many Sufi masters came from urban, "middle class" backgrounds, and could boast of at least some (in some cases, a great deal of) religious education. It is true that Sufis often expressed reservations about the reliability of the written word as a means of transmitting knowledge, especially knowledge of an esoteric kind. The fact is, nevertheless, that they also expressed these reservations in writing. If the illiterate mystic who attained spiritual perfection through divine grace was not just a topos of Sufi literature, neither was the learned Sufi, who combined exoteric with esoteric knowledge. In the Ottoman Empire, many practitioners of Sufism were in fact prolific readers and writers, and dervish lodges rivaled the mosques and *madrasas* as sites of literary activity, and surpassed them when it came to the vernacular Turkish literature.⁹

As writers of self-narratives, Ottoman Sufis also had an advantage over the rest of the literate minority in that Sufism provided them with a set of highly sophisticated concepts and vocabulary with which to write about themselves as well as with a reason to do so. Central to the Sufi quest for

9. This is not to suggest a strict spatial divide for the pursuit of Sufism and religiolegal studies. Mosques and *madrasas* were as much a space for Sufi dervishes as for anyone else, if not more. By the seventeenth century, in fact, it had become customary for Sufi masters in Istanbul to hold joint positions as sheikhs of dervish lodges and preachers in mosques (Madeline Zilfi, "The Kadızadeli: Discordant Revivalism in Seventeenth-Century Istanbul," JNES 4 (October 1986): 251-71). In some orders such as the Nakshbandiyye and the Zeyniyye it was also common for Sufi masters to simultaneously hold positions as scholars of Islamic law in *madrasas*.

God was the view that one can only know God if one knows oneself. This was in fact an ancient idea that went back to the Delphic oracle "Know yourself," and had been reworked into the Islamic tradition in the form of the hadith, "One who knows oneself knows one's Lord" (*Man 'arafa nafsahu, 'arafa rabbahu*). The self that was the object of this knowledge was a self in the making, in a continuous process of transformation. Like their pagan and Christian counterparts, Sufis used many different techniques in this process, from ascetic practices, intended to break the hold of the body over the soul (*nafs*) and subject the latter to the dictates of the spirit (*rūh*), to contemplation of the divine through such faculties as the senses, the imagination and the mind. Whatever the means applied, the Sufi process of training was typically conceived as a process of self-fulfillment, whereby the adept realized his (and not infrequently, her) human potential as the "microcosm," as "man created in the image of God." While the process was sometimes described as a kind of self-annihilation, or "death before one's death," in technical writings Sufi writers were careful to point out the limits of this metaphor: ultimately, it was not possible or even desirable to remain in a state of annihilation in the divine (*fanā fī'llāh*), and one had to return to reach the even higher stage of "subsistence" (*bakā*) whereby one lived in this world as a fully transformed self.⁽¹⁰⁾

In addition to these ideas about and techniques of self-transformation, Ottoman practitioners of Sufism also inherited from earlier generations a whole lore of life stories, the life stories of their masters, masters of their masters and other great Sufis of the past. These stories were transmitted both orally and through writing. The life-writings could take many forms from biographical dictionaries (*ṭabaḳāt*), covering whole generations of Sufis and other men of religion, to vitae of individual Sufis (*menāḳibnāme*) and from general works on Sufism, where life stories (whether of the author or of other Sufis) served as *exempla* for various points of instruction, to book-length first-person accounts written by Sufi masters.

For all the wealth of life-writings in the Sufi literary tradition, nevertheless, neither the Ottoman Sufi writers nor their medieval predecessors had a special term for what we variously designate as "first-person writings," "self-narratives" or "egodocuments." Rather, there were a number of different genres that overlapped with this modern category, and as in early modern Europe, the lines dividing the various genres were both blurred and in shift.⁽¹¹⁾ While a good case has been made for the existence of autobiography as a recognized genre in Arabic literature, and while the genre was

10. For a more detailed discussion, see Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 98-193 and Franz Rosenthal, "'I am you': Individual piety and society in Islam" in *Individualism and conformity in classical Islam: Fifth Giorgio Levi Della Vida Biennial Conference*, eds. Amin Banani and Speros Vryonis (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1977), 33-60.

11. For a recent investigation of the different genres of life writing in early modern Europe, see *The Rhetorics of Life-Writing in Early Modern Europe: Forms of Biography from Cassandra Fedele to Louis XIV*, eds. Thomas F. Mayer and D.R. Woolf (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1995).

well and alive in Ottoman literature in both Turkish and Arabic, Ottoman Sufi writers wrote about themselves in many other literary forms as well. ⁽¹²⁾ In this connection, the act of writing one's life could easily be meshed with the act of writing the life of another. Some Ottoman dervishes, like their South Asian counterparts, wrote a great deal about themselves in the compilations they made of the oral teachings of their masters (*malfūzāt, maḳālāt*). ⁽¹³⁾ Others, one might speculate, left autobiographical accounts at least partly in the hope of exercising some control over the biographies their disciples might later write about them, not an uncommon motivation among autobiographers in general. The famous Celveti master Maḥmūd Ḥüdā'i (d. 1623), for instance, authorized his disciples to make copies of both the diary he kept as a Sufi adept and the visionary account he wrote as a "perfected" master. A comparison of the original diary with the later editions, nevertheless, reveals that the copyists edited the text considerably, leaving a much thinner stratum of personal material. ⁽¹⁴⁾ Bio/hagiographers who drew on the first-person accounts of their subjects seem to have exercised at least as much discretion. ⁽¹⁵⁾

Much has been made of the role played by confessional practices in giving birth to a rich personal literature and an introspective self in Christian Europe. While there was no equivalent formal institution among the Muslims at large, the practice of self-examination (*muḥāsaba*) by the early Muslim ascetics and later the Sufis can be considered a distant cousin of the Christian practices. ⁽¹⁶⁾ The ascetic and proto-Sufi Muḥāsibī (d. 857), whose sobriquet reflects the importance he gave to self-examination, recommended it as part of a regimen of self-discipline for all who wanted to render unto God what was His due. ⁽¹⁷⁾ While Muḥāsibī did not make any mention of writing in the process, from the *Rūḥ al-ḳuds* of Muḥyi al-dīn Ibn 'Arabī (d. 1240) we learn of at least one ascetical master in twelfth-century Maghrib

12. Reynolds, ed., *Interpreting the Self*, 36-51; for Ottoman examples, see the Annotated Guide appended to this study.

13. For a historical and literary analysis of this genre, as employed by South Asian Sufis, see Ernst, *Eternal Garden: Mysticism, History and Politics*, 62-84. In Ottoman literature the best example of a text that is related to this genre but is at the same time a personal diary is Ḥüdā'i's *Kelīmāt 'an al-tibr al-maslūk fī mā jāra bayna ḥaḍrat al-shayḥ wa bayna ḥadha'l-fakīr fī athnā al-sulūk* (Words of gold which were exchange between this poor one and the venerable master during initiation), discussed further below.

14. For a partial list of the manuscript copies of Ḥüdā'i's first person accounts, see Ziver Tezeren, *Seyyid Aziz Maḥmūd Ḥüdā'i: Hayatı, Şahsiyeti, Tarikatı ve Eserleri* (Istanbul, 1984-5), vol. 1, 71, 83-84. The copies consulted here are Hacı Selim Ağa Ktp., Hüdayi 249 (3 vols bound in one, thought to be an autograph), Hüdayi 250 and Süleymaniye Ktp., Esad Efendi 1792. Also the following partial Turkish translations have been consulted: Hacı Selim Ağa Ktp., Hüdayi 483/3. Süleymaniye Ktp., Dügümlü Baba 372.

15. A good example would be the use of selections from Niyāzi-i Mişri's first-person accounts in Rākım's *Vākı'āt* (Süleymaniye Ktp., İzmir 790; Bursa Ktp., Genel 772). As will be discussed further below, Rākım also explicitly tried to discredit some aspects of Mişri's version of his own life.

16. For the classic humanist account of the ancient Roman origins of self-examination, see Georg Misch, *Geschichte der Autobiographie*, pt. 1, vol. 1 (1907); for a return to the same theme by a critic of humanism, see Michel Foucault, "Technologies of the Self," in *Technologies of the Self. Seminar with Michel Foucault*, eds. Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman and Patrick H. Hutton (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), 16-49.

17. Muḥāsibī, *Kitāb al-rī'āya li-ḥuḳūḳ Allāh*, ed. Margaret Smith (London: Luzac, 1940), 12-17.

who had the habit of "recording his deeds everyday until nightfall which he would use in calling himself to account before retiring to bed."¹⁸)

Among the Ottoman Sufis, nevertheless, self-examination appears to have been institutionalized for use primarily by adepts undergoing initiation under the direction of a Sufi master rather than by masters in their prime. It is tempting to think that the consolidation of the master-disciple relationship as the primary way to become a Sufi after the thirteenth century had something to do with the stark differentiation between the modes of self-representation used by novices and masters. This difference is best illustrated by comparing two personal records written by the Celveti dervish Hüdâ'î Efendi in two different stages of his career. The first of these, entitled *Kalimât 'an al-tibr al-maskûk fî mâ jâra bayn hâdhâ'l-fakîr wa ḥaḍrat al-shayḥ fî athnâ al-sulûk* (Words of gold which were exchanged between this poor one and the venerable master during initiation) or *Wâkı'ât* (Events), is a diary Hüdâ'î kept in Arabic while undergoing spiritual training under Üftâde Mehmed Efendi between the years 1577 and 1579. The text consists exclusively of the conversations Hüdâ'î had with his master, and covers only those events in the author's waking and dream life that came up in these conversations. In this text, Hüdâ'î represents himself in the typical role of the novice, often in quandary, sometimes in tears, always in need of explanation and confirmation despite the fact that he was at the time Üftâde's prized student with some experience as a deputy judge and a *madrassa* professor. Nothing of this hesitation and self-doubt is in evidence in his *Tecelliyât* (Manifestations), a record, in Turkish, of the dream visions he had after the completion of his *sulûk*. In the later text, in fact, Hüdâ'î dispenses not only with the mediation of an external interpreter figure but also with the critical distance he maintained towards himself in the earlier diary.¹⁹)

That Hüdâ'î's case was not an anomaly is clear from the fact that virtually all the other extant Ottoman first-person accounts written in the mode of self-examination were written by Sufi writers still in the process of completing *sulûk*. This is not to say, however, that this was the only factor that shaped their accounts. It has been argued, for instance, that the recurrence of the motif of self-doubt in the "dream letters" written by 'Aşiye Hatun, an Ottoman female dervish from Skopje (in modern Macedonia) circa 1641-3 was a gendered feature of the text, reflecting the subordinate position of the author as a woman.²⁰) In the case of Seyyid 'Osmân, the father of the

18. Ibn 'Arabî, *Sufis of Andalusia: The Rûh al-Quds and Al-Durrat al-Fâkhirah*, translated with Introduction and Notes by R.W.J. Austin (Sherborne: Beshara Publications, 1971), 84. Note that the practice described here bears a remarkable resemblance to the practice of the Stoics in ancient Rome (see footnote 16).

19. For the references to the diary, see footnote 14; copies of the *Tecelliyât* consulted here are Süleymaniye Ktp., Hacı Mahmut Efendi 2372/3, and Hacı Selim Ağa Ktp., Hüdayî 271/8593/3.

20. Cemal Kafadar, "Mütereddît bir mutasavvîf: Üsküp'lü Asiye Hatun'un Rüya Defteri, 1641-43," *Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Yıllık* 5 (1992): 168-222 (includes transcription and facsimile); also published by the same historian without the facsimile and full transcription as Asiye Hatun, *Rüya Mektupları* (İstanbul: Oğlak, 1994). For another interpretation of 'Aşiye Hatun's "hesitation," see Faroqhi, *Subjects of the Sultan*, 116.

famous Nakshbandi sheikh Erzurumlu İbrâhim Hakkî, who wrote an account of his affliction with and recovery from "an ailment of the heart" between the years 1698 and 1711, his doubts about his self-worth and the possibility of finding a true guide were exacerbated by the fact that he lived in a town where there was at the time an environment of considerable hostility towards the Sufi orders. ⁽²¹⁾

All the elements of self-scrutiny also appear but in a decidedly retrospective fashion in spiritual autobiographies or "conversion" accounts written by Sufi masters after the completion of their *sulûk*. One of the best-known Muslim spiritual autobiographies was written by a *kalâm* scholar and a defender of "moderate" Sufism: the *Munqidh min al-ḍalāl* (*Savior from Error*) by Abū Hāmid al-Gāzālī (d. 1111). In his autobiography, Gāzālī relates the story of how he fell into a crisis of faith at the height of his career due to his excessive reliance on reason, and how he later recovered thanks to Sufi teachings emphasizing personal illumination. ⁽²²⁾ While Ottoman Sufi writers made many references to Gāzālī's autobiography in their defense of Sufism, however, the text did not necessarily set the tone for later spiritual autobiographies. Writing about how he joined the Mevlevî order in the first half of the 16th century, the Ottoman writer Şāhidî freely discussed many aspects of his life that the likes of Gāzālī would have found objectionable such as the use of wine and hashish in his master's circles. ⁽²³⁾

Şāhidî importantly belonged to a branch of the Mevlevî order in which *melāmî* tendencies were very strong. Once a separate path alongside Sufism, but later incorporated into it, *melāmetiyye* or the path of self-blame was based on the idea that true perfection comes only by way of absolute sincerity and humility and that a good reputation in the eyes of the public is the most severe obstacle in this regard. Hence *melāmîs* were known to avoid (at least publicly) forms of behavior that would brand them as pious in the public eye while engaging (or seeming to engage) in others that the public found distasteful, or objectionable or at least not particularly pious.

It has been argued that this divergent, more internalized approach to piety, particularly well represented among the Sufis of Anatolia and the Balkans, lent itself to a "deviant individualism." ⁽²⁴⁾ There is little indication, however, that individualism was either a goal or even a necessary effect of the practice of *melāmet*. In fact, it could be argued with good evidence from both medieval Persian and Ottoman poetry that the ethos of *melāmet* also

21. A modern Turkish transcription of the memoirs can be found in Mesih İbrahimhakkıoğlu, *Erzurumlu İbrahim Hakkı* (Istanbul, 1973), 13-40.

22. For an English translation, see Abū Hāmid al-Gāzālī, *al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl and Other Relevant Works of Al-Ghazālī*, trans. Richard Joseph McCarthy (Boston: Twayne, 1980), 61-143.

23. Faroqhi, *Subjects of the Sultan*, 198.

24. Ahmet Karamustafa, *God's unruly friends: dervish groups in the Islamic later period, 1200-1550* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1994), especially 25-38. For a discussion of the *qalandar* (socially deviant dervish) as a topos, see Ewing, *Arguing Sainthood*, 230-252. On *melāmet* and the *melāmî* tradition in the Ottoman lands, see Abdülhakî Gölpinarlı, *Melâmîlik ve Melâmîler* (reprint, Istanbul: Gri, 1992).

inspired various topoi, stock images and scripts of ideal behavior, which constituted an alternative to more shariah-minded models. On the other hand, the availability of multiple scripts of behavior and the open-ended performative possibilities of *melâmet* do seem to have enabled Ottoman Sufi writers to represent and justify in writing a wider range of behavior than would otherwise be possible.

Perhaps the Sufi first-person narratives that lent themselves the least to the conventions of everyday life, however, were the visionary autobiographies typically written by Sufi masters at the height of their careers. ⁽²⁵⁾ In these texts, Sufi writers related the visions and other extraordinary experiences that signaled their election to the highest spiritual distinctions in the bold and often deliberately transgressive idiom of *shahî* or “ecstatic speech.” As Sufi apologists explained, this was an idiom that mystics had devised to describe realities that they knew only from experience and which were paradoxically understood to be indescribable. Hence, readers were urged to understand that when a mystic like Manşûr al-Ḥallāj said, “I am the True” (*Anā'l-Ḥakk*), he did not mean that he, Ḥallāj, was God, but that he had attained a level of consciousness that allowed him to realize in an intimate manner that he was nothing and that all existence was God. ⁽²⁶⁾

If their experiences were essentially ineffable, it might be asked, why did Sufi masters write these visionary accounts? Not to “learn” from their experiences, to judge by the absence of a concern with self-scrutiny in them. And not to teach or set an example, as the “incidents” they related were by definition experiences that only a few could hope to emulate. More likely, like the Tibetan Buddhist monks who were also prolific writers of visionary autobiographies, the Sufi authors were concerned to highlight the fact that their teachings about the divine or invisible realms were grounded in their personal experiences, experiences they had in a particular place at a particular time. As in the case of the Tibetan texts, the Sufi visionary autobiographies might have also served to establish the authority of their author/subjects as the preeminent masters of the time. ⁽²⁷⁾ Finally, these

25. For a discussion of the genre in the twelfth century, see Carl W. Ernst, *Rūzbihān Baqlī: Mysticism and the Rhetoric of Sainthood in Persian Sufism* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1996), 93-101. A number of pre-Ottoman Sufi visionary accounts have been edited and translated into Western languages: Tirmidhī, *The Beginning of the Affair of Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī in The Concept of Sainthood in Early Islamic Mysticism: Two works by Al-Hakim al-Tirmidhi*, translated with introduction by Bernd Radtke and John O' Kane (Surrey: Curzon Press, 1996), 15-36; Rūzbihān Baklī, *Kashf al-asrār* translated into French by Paul Ballanfat as *Le Dévoilement des secrets* (Paris: Éd. Du Seuil, 1996) and translated into English by Carl Ernst as *The Unveiling of Secrets: Diary of a Sufi Master* (Chapel Hill: Parvardigar Press, 1997). Also see Jonathan G. Katz, “Visionary Experience, Autobiography, and Sainthood in North African Islam,” *Princeton Papers in Near Eastern Studies* 1 (1992): 85-117; *Dreams, Sufism and Sainthood: The Visionary Career of Muḥammad al-Zawāwī* (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1996).

26. On *shahî* in “classical” Sufism, see Carl Ernst, *Words of Ecstasy in Sufism*, (Albany: SUNY Press, 1996); for a comparative approach to the same, see Michael A. Sells, *Mystical Languages of Unsaying*, (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1994).

27. On Tibetan spiritual autobiographies, see Janet Gyatso, *Apparitions of the Self: The Secret Autobiographies of a Tibetan Visionary* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998).

autobiographies inserted their author/subjects in a continuous chain of spiritual authority, going all the way back to the prophet Muhammad. In this regard, it would be difficult to overemphasize the intertextuality of these narratives, woven with references to the ascension of Muhammad as well as of earlier Sufis. ⁽²⁸⁾

Indebted as they were to the earlier literature, nevertheless, the first-person accounts left by Ottoman Sufi writers also differed in some important ways from their medieval counterparts. Whereas earlier writers like Ḥakīm Tirmidhī (d. ca. 905-910), Rūzbihān Baqlī (d. 1209) and Ibn ‘Arabī had constructed their life narratives strictly around their spiritual experiences and discussed other aspects of their life only insofar as they illuminated the latter, Ottoman Sufi writers like Ṣāhidī, Ḥudā’ī and Seyyid ‘Osman tended to be much more inclusive. ⁽²⁹⁾ Regardless of the genre in which they wrote, whether they wrote during or after their *sulūk*, they often gave glimpses (and sometimes more) into their everyday lives. They mentioned their friends and foes by name, reported conversations that had no obvious religious or mystical content, and even gave information about their intimate family lives.

Parallel to the increased visibility of the mundane, dates, the markers of worldly time, are also much more prominent in the life writings of Ottoman Sufis. This is nowhere more evident than in the emergence of a new literary form used by Sufi writers: the diary. It is true that the diary as a literary form had precedents in medieval Arabic literature. The medieval Arabic diaries known by the generic name of *tā’rīḥ* (from *arraḥa* or *warraḥa*, to fix dates) were basically scrapbooks in which information was recorded that would later be used for the composition of annalistic or biographical histories. ⁽³⁰⁾ With the possible exception of the Maghribi diarist of the twelfth century, nevertheless, there is little evidence that this practice was in use among the Sufi writers prior to the sixteenth century. ⁽³¹⁾ Moreover, the Ottoman practice of diary keeping was not exactly a continuation of the medieval Arabic one, but drew on the conventions of several different literary practices, from the writing of annalistic histories to autobiography. The hybrid character of Ottoman diary keeping is even indicated by the variety of titles given to Ottoman diaries, including some that are nondescript such as *cerīde* and

28. On the use of Muhammad’s ascension (*mi’rāj*) as a prototype for the visionary writings of Ibn ‘Arabī, see James Winston Morris, “The Spiritual Ascension: Ibn ‘Arabī and the Mi’rāj” in two parts, *JAOS* 107, 4 (1987): 629-652; 108, 1 (1988): 63-77.

29. It is interesting to observe a similar incorporation of the mundane in the visionary autobiographies authored by Maghribi Sufis from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century. On this literature, see Katz, “Visionary Experience,” and *Dreams, Sufism and Sainthood*.

30. George Makdisi, “The diary in Islamic historiography: some notes,” *History and Theory*, 25, 2 (1986): 173-185. For the Arabic text and English translation of one such diary, see Idem, “Autograph diary of an eleventh-century historian of Baghdad” *BSOAS*, 18, 1 (1956): 9-31 (part 1); 18, 2 (1956): 239-260 (part 2); 19, 1 (1957): 2-48 (part 3); 19, 2 (1957): 281-303 (part 4); 19, 3 (1957): 426-443 (part 5).

31. On Ottoman diaries see Kafadar, “Self and Others,” 128-130; Madeline Zilfi, “The Diary of a Müderis: A New Source for Ottoman Biography,” *Journal of Turkish Studies* 1 (1977): 157-173.

mecmū'a, some that signal continuity with the medieval Arabic tradition such as *vākı'ât* and *yevmiye*, and some that point in rather different directions such as *şoĥbet-nâme* (book of conversation or companionship).

The appropriation by Ottoman Sufis of narrative forms which had previously been marginal to their literary tradition, and more generally, the expansion of the boundaries of Sufi first-person accounts paralleled the increasing incorporation of Muslim mystics into the larger, social, political and economic networks around them. This was actually a long-term process that had begun with the popularization of Sufism and growth of the *tarikats* or Sufi orders between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries. While the political power of the orders was checked by the growth of more powerful states such as the Ottoman state after the fourteenth century, the process of incorporation continued under state supervision. Even if the Ottoman state never co-opted the Sufi orders to the same extent that it did the ulema, still it had made considerable headway in establishing itself as a major dispenser of posts and positions as well as an arbiter of religious standards by the seventeenth century. ⁽³²⁾

The new importance of this political sphere was revealed best in the context of the military and fiscal crisis that engulfed the Ottoman state in the late sixteenth century and became a chronic feature of Ottoman politics thereafter. In the next two centuries, not just Ottoman bureaucrats and administrators but also ulema, and even low-ranking religious functionaries and Sufi sheikhs participated in an ongoing debate about the future of the Ottoman state in a flurry of political tracts and chronicles. It was also in this context that a puritanical reform movement known as the Kadızadeli after the charismatic preacher Kâdizâde Meĥmed Efendi (d. 1635) emerged and rapidly gained audience. Drawing on a minority tradition within medieval Islam, the Kadızadeli called for a return to the "pure" Islam of the early Muslims and wanted to purge their society of all "innovations" (*bid'at*) such as coffeehouses, smoking, dance and music. Above all, however, they directed their criticisms at the Sufi orders, which were at this time an important feature of Ottoman urban life. ⁽³³⁾

Not all these developments were necessarily discussed by the Sufi autobiographers and diarists, but must have helped to alter their sense of identity by making new demands on them as well as by exposing them to new modes of identification and new discourses. Among the Sufi first-person writings of this period, nevertheless, the text that best reflects this process is the diary of Niyâzî-i Mıŝrî.

32. An outdated but nevertheless indispensable account of the institutional history of the Sufi orders is J. Spencer Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971). For the disciplining of the "heterodox" orders by the Ottoman state, see the studies of A.Y.Ocak, most notably his *Osmanlı Toplumunda Zındıklar ve Mülhidler (15.-17. Yüzyıllar)* (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı, 1998).

33. Madeline Zilfi, "The Kadızadeli: Discordant Revivalism in Seventeenth-Century Istanbul," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 4 (October 1986): 251-271 and *The Politics of Piety: the Ottoman Ulema in the Postclassical Age (1600-1800)* (Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1988).

Mecmū'a-i kelimât-ı ʔudsiyye: the diary of an early modern Sufi

Written at a time when the genres of life writing were both blurred and getting more blurred still, Mıřrı's diary is also difficult to place in any one genre. The text, taking up roughly 85 folios of a 116 folio autograph manuscript and written in vernacular Turkish, is registered in the catalogue of the Bursa Rare Prints and Manuscripts Library under the title *Mecmū'a-i kelimât-ı ʔudsiyye-i ʔazret-i Mıřrı* (The Collection of the Sacred Words of the Venerable Mıřrı).⁽³⁴⁾ This title was recorded on the front page of the manuscript by an anonymous reader in 1808, and as such, gives us important clues about the literary categories to which Mıřrı's readers (or at least some of them) tried to assimilate the text. These are: 1) collections of *makālât* or *malʔūzât*, or as they were more commonly titled by Turkish-speakers, "*kelimât*," compilations of the "sayings" of Sufi masters typically copied down by one of their disciples, 2) texts of ecstatic speech or *shaʔh*, and 3) *ʔadith ʔudsî*, a subcategory of hadiths considered as revelations of a secondary degree. Mıřrı himself referred to his diary generally as his "*mecmū'a*," a nondescript word meaning "journal" or "compilation." He also used the word "*tā'riḫ*," which can be translated as "history" or "date" and which was the term used to designate diaries in medieval Arabic as well as Ottoman literature, to refer to the prognostications he entered in his diary. As we shall see below, all these categories capture some aspect of the text, but none quite describes it in all its complexity.

Many of the unusual features of Mıřrı's diary have to do with the unusual circumstances in which it was written. At the time he kept his diary, Mıřrı was already in his early sixties, a well-known Sufi master, writer and poet as well as an outspoken dissident. He was also into his fourth year in self-prolonged exile on the island of Lemnos. Like many other sheikhs of the ʔalvetî order, Mıřrı had run into trouble with the government in the context of the Kadızadeli controversy, during the grand vizierate of Köprülüzâde Ahmed Pasha (1661-76), when Kadızadeli influence peaked under the leadership of the imperial preacher Vâni Efendi (d. 1685). A Sufi master with a *melâmî* bent, Mıřrı had, under pressure, become progressively radicalized, and the government had responded by banishing him first to Rhodes (1674-75) and then to Lemnos (1677-92).⁽³⁵⁾ During the period covered in the diary, the Sufi writer was not technically in prison, having been amnestied and released from the fortress of Lemnos in 1678. Yet this made little difference for him, as he refused to return to Bursa, his former place of resi-

34. Mıřrı, *Mecmū'a-i kelimât-ı ʔudsiyye*, Bursa Ktp., Orhan 690 (Hereafter referred to as MKK). The manuscript also includes a number of poems written by Mıřrı (most of them written during his exilement, and dated like the entries in the main narrative) as well as a number of short excerpts from treatises and poems written by other Sufis. I am currently preparing a critical edition and English translation of the diary.

35. For the details of Mıřrı's career and thought, see my "Sufi and Dissident in the Ottoman Empire: Niyâzi-i Mıřrı (1618-1694)," Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1999.

dence, on grounds of security, and lived instead in the Harbor mosque, located outside the fortress on the shore of Lemnos without venturing outside the mosque's courtyard even once.

There is an intimate connection between Mıṣrî's experience of exile and his keeping of a diary. While earlier, too, the Sufi sheikh had recorded the important events of his life both in a scrapbook and in the *Mawā'id al-İrfân*, intended to be a summa of his teachings, it was only after his banishment that he became an inveterate diarist.⁽³⁶⁾ In turning to writing in the first person voice in response to an experience of imprisonment, Mıṣrî had many precedents. Among the Sufis there was 'Ayn al-quḍât al-Hamadâni (d. 1191), who defended himself against his detractors and provided a good deal of autobiographical information in his "apology" written during his trial for heresy.⁽³⁷⁾ In Mıṣrî's own time, several Ottoman soldiers who fell captive to the "infidel" wrote accounts of their experiences.⁽³⁸⁾ Closer to Mıṣrî's experience still were the Muslim prisoners of war who had inscribed brief testimonies to their lives in prison on the walls of the dungeons of Rhodes, where Mıṣrî himself had stayed for a year.⁽³⁹⁾

The experience of banishment was so central to Mıṣrî's diary that he dated each entry by writing the number of days that had passed since the beginning of his first imprisonment. Even though most of the entries in the autograph manuscript are from the year 1681 with a few misplaced entries from the years 1680, 1682 and 1685, all evidence indicates that Mıṣrî had begun to keep his diary earlier during his banishment and continued to do so long after the dates covered in the autograph manuscript.⁽⁴⁰⁾ To judge by the misplacement of some entries, the manuscript in its present form was compiled and bounded by someone other than Mıṣrî, someone who either did not realize that the text in question was a diary, or did not care to put back the misplaced entries in chronological order. Even though the diary in its pre-

36. *Mecmû'a-i Şeyh Mıṣrî*, Süleymaniye Ktp., Reşid 1218, 5b; *Mawā'id al-İrfân wa awā'id al-ihsân*, Hacı Selim Ağa Ktp., Hüdayî 587, 18a-19b, 21a-23b, 26b-28a, 46b-51b; for the Turkish translation, see *Mawaidu'l-İrfân – İrfân Sofraları*, éd. Süleyman Ateş (Ankara, 1971), 32-4, 36-41, 44-46, 75-83.

37. *A Sufi Martyr: The Apologia of 'Ain al-Qudât al-Hamadhâni*, translated with introduction and notes by A.J. Arberry (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1969).

38. On Ottoman captivity narratives, see Kafadar, "Self and Others," 131-134; for an example from Mıṣrî's time period, see R.F. Kreutel, ed., *Die Autobiographie des Dolmetschers Osman Ağa aus Temeschwar* (Hertford, 1980).

39. These "graffiti" are described by Evliyâ Çelebi, who visited the fortress in 1671, only three years before Mıṣrî's banishment there. (*Seyâhatnâme*, Topkapı Sarayı Ktp., Bağdat 306, vol. 9, 113a-114a).

40. There is both internal and external evidence to support this conclusion. The internal evidence consists basically of the system of dating employed in the diary. Unless the Sufi diarist had earlier entries in his diary to fall back on, it is difficult to understand how he could have dated the numerous events which had taken place during the earlier years of his exile according to the same personalized calendar (giving the number of days that separated those events from the beginning of his first banishment) and with a remarkable degree of accuracy (to which this author can testify having carefully matched his system of dating with the occasional Hijri dates he gives in the diary). The external evidence consists of a number of "treatises" by Mıṣrî, which were copied by others into various manuscript compilations, and which have all the appearance of later entries from his diary: İstanbul Üniversitesi Ktp., TY 6374, 119a-124b, Süleymaniye Ktp., Pertev 244, 10b-12a and Süleymaniye Ktp., Pertev 620, 48b-54a.

sent form does not have a formal ending (and probably never had one), occasionally the Sufi writer indicates the conclusion of an individual entry with the word “*temme*” (completed). ⁽⁴¹⁾

In view of the fact that sometimes the word “diary” is used loosely for texts that do not merit the term, it is important to emphasize that Mıṣrî’s diary does indeed exhibit many of the literary “effects” that have been associated with early modern and modern European examples of the genre, including [Cut!], “non-selectivity,” “immediacy” and above all, “diarism or the mark of temporality, the day-to-day.” ⁽⁴²⁾ Of course, all these “effects” were sometimes more observed in the breach than in the practice, and Mıṣrî’s diary is no exception. The Sufi diarist’s routine was to make two entries each day, once at night and once in midday. However, like most diarists, he did not always manage to keep up with his routine, and made up for his occasional lapses by making brief entries for the missing days. In a number of places, the Sufi diarist also noted when his writing was unexpectedly interrupted, thus heightening the effect of immediacy in the text.

Where Mıṣrî’s diary departs from most modern examples of the genre, on the other hand, is in its conversational mode. In keeping with the title ascribed to it by later readers (The Collection of the Sacred Words of Mıṣrî), the diary reads in parts like an extended conversation, for Mıṣrî not only transcribed therein the conversations he had with the people around him, but also frequently interrupted the narrative with diatribes directed at various figures. The identity of his addressees constantly varied. Sometimes he addressed himself, sometimes God, sometimes “the people of Islam,” but perhaps more frequently than others, his “enemies,” including various figures on the island and grandees in the imperial capital. While the Sufi writer appears to have used the mode of conversation as a rhetorical device to express his thoughts or emotions, various passages also give the distinct impression that they were written for an actual audience. Particularly telling in this regard are Mıṣrî’s instructions for his real and imaginary readers about how to read his text, explaining his system of dating, and accounting for certain contradictions he detected in earlier entries.

The diary also contains clues about the identity of some of its actual readers. In a number of places, the Sufi diarist writes explicitly of having lent the “history” of this or that day to a disciple or a fellow Sufi or of having allowed a disciple to read a certain entry. ⁽⁴³⁾ In yet another passage, nevertheless, he also writes that God gave him permission to write but not to have copies made of his writing. ⁽⁴⁴⁾ This suggests that while the Sufi writer did not keep his diary as a strictly private document, neither did he intend to circulate it widely. One of his greatest fears, in fact, was that his enemies

41. MKK, 48b, 53a, 55a, 59a (before the end of entry for the day), 62a, 64b, 68a, 105a.

42. Steven Rendall, “On Diaries,” *diacritics* 16 (fall 1986): 57-65.

43. MKK, 43a, 43b, 46b, 56a.

44. *Ibid.*, 75a.

would snatch his “*mecmû‘a*” from under his mattress while he was asleep and then use it to embarrass him, and to expose his mistakes – exhibiting, in a slightly exaggerated form, a characteristic anxiety of diarists in all times and places. ⁽⁴⁵⁾

In terms of its contents, Mısrî’s writing represents an interesting amalgam of a secular diary and a visionary account. It is very much as a secular diarist that Mısrî described in each entry how he spent the day, not sparing us details about how he slept, what he ate and his state of health as well as the people who visited him and who brought him news. While we would look in vain for this kind of mundane information in medieval Sufi self-narratives, we can find plenty of parallels in Ottoman Sufi literature. In fact, some of Mısrî’s fellow *Ḥalvetis* like Seyyid Ḥasan recorded in their diaries nothing but such mundane occurrences. ⁽⁴⁶⁾

Mısrî’s diary also gives us considerable insight into his emotional state at the time. The most commonly represented emotions in the diary are all of a negative nature – fear, distrust, anxiety and anger – and refer the reader back to the central theme of the diary: persecution. ⁽⁴⁷⁾ Above all, a basic feeling of insecurity permeates Mısrî’s account of his days and invests each and every one of his observations with tremendous significance. If his brother Aḥmed failed to show up one morning, the Sufi sheikh worried that his enemies in the palace or their deputies in Lemnos might have enlisted his brother’s help in a conspiracy against his person. ⁽⁴⁸⁾ If he noticed a new grave in the graveyard, he assumed it was for him or for a devoted disciple who had come to visit him. ⁽⁴⁹⁾ If the waterman came delayed, he took it as a sign that his enemies were poisoning his water, and when he noticed his face was swollen, he attributed it to the effect of that poison, and cooked his food in the juice of watermelons as precaution. ⁽⁵⁰⁾

While these speculations can be attributed to a mental state of extreme fear and even paranoia, fear was also mixed with desire for Mısrî. Throughout his diary, the Sufi sheikh expresses desire for martyrdom, giving voice to a sentiment well known from the life stories and writings of such early Sufis as Maṣnûr al-Ḥallāj. The problem in Mısrî’s case, however, was that the awaited moment of martyrdom failed to come, keeping him waiting in trepidation and prompting him to chide (in the seeming privacy of his diary) Sultan Mehmed IV for not being sultan enough to punish him as he deserved to be punished. In this connection, he also stated that he

45. *Ibid.*, 56b.

46. Kafadar, “Self and Others.”

47. Compare with the more restrained treatments of the emotional self in medieval Arabic autobiography as well as in some examples of Ottoman Sufi literature: Kirsten Brustad, “Imposing Order: Reading the Conventions of Representation in al-Suyûtî’s Autobiography,” *Edebiyât* 7 (1997): 327-344; Reynolds, ed., *Interpreting the Self*, 72-99; Kafadar, “Self and Others,” 145-6.

48. MKK, 1b, 102a.

49. *Ibid.*, 72a.

50. *Ibid.*, 9b.

regarded banishment to be a far worse punishment than execution precisely because there was no clear end to it. ⁽⁵¹⁾

Mısrî's grievances against the Ottoman authorities also had an intriguing sexual subtext, and were related at least in part to his marital problems. While the Sufi sheikh had enjoyed an apparently peaceful marriage with his first wife for nineteen years, the same could not be said of the three marriages he made after her death. He had made all three marriages shortly before or after his first banishment, and his prolonged absence from home had probably soured his relations with his wives and in-laws. In a conversation recorded in the diary the aggrieved sheikh claimed that he had not had sexual relationship with any of his new wives, when they were "taken" (*aldurmak*) by his enemies. He also denied being the father of 'Ali, born by his third wife in 1676 and Nûrullâh, born by his second wife shortly before. He had complained to the kadi about all this, but to no avail, and this he saw as proof of the high-level complicity in the "rape" or "adultery" of his wives (he writes about the affairs in both ways). At the time the Sufi sheikh kept his diary, he had already divorced all three of his wives, even though he continued to receive visits from his in-laws, which he did not enjoy. ⁽⁵²⁾

Neither did Mısrî's complaints against the sexual abuses of Ottoman grandees end there. A fear he expressed often in his diary was that of being raped or "sodomized" by the hirelings of his enemies in the palace. The Sufi sheikh explained his decision to sleep on the preaching booth (*minber*) of the Harbor mosque as a precaution against this threat. As in the case of his awaited persecution, he also dared his Ottoman persecutors to come and rape him if they could. Even if "all the members of the House of 'Osmân from its origins to this day" were revived and came to help the present sultan and his men in their attempt to rape Mısrî, the Sufi sheikh wrote on one occasion, they could not succeed because it was not the will of God. ⁽⁵³⁾

Were these bizarre tales of sexual violation a product of Mısrî's imagination? Did the Sufi sheikh literally mean what he discussed with seeming candor? In the wider Sufi literature, dreams about sexual intercourse between master and disciple – and sometimes the rape of the latter by the former – were in fact quite common and were typically interpreted as a symbol of the disciple's initiation into divine love by his master. It is difficult, however, to find a similar symbolism at work in Mısrî's stories about his "adulterous" wives and would-be rapists. Significantly, even Ottoman commentators keen to explain away these stories did not resort to such a sacralizing interpretation. Râkım, the author of Mısrî's earliest known biography, who must have learned about these claims of Mısrî either from the latter's writings or from oral reports, argued that the Sufi sheikh had denied being

51. Ibid., 12a.

52. Ibid., 9a-b, 18a, 40b, 55a, 56a, 59b, 63b, 79b-80a. For an alternative account of his marriages, which tries to explain away the sheikh's allegations, see his biographer: Râkım, *Vākı'ât*, 16-7, 91-2.

53. MKK, 60b-61a.

the father of 'Alī simply to protect his son against his enemies. Likewise, according to Rākım, it was to expose the governor of Lemnos' "sodomization" of his young servants that Mıřrı had accused him in public of having attempted to rape him. ⁽⁵⁴⁾ These alternative scenarios may be dismissed as so many attempts to bring the image of Mıřrı in line with that of his much less controversial successors, but it is not as easy to deliver a judgment on Mıřrı's own version of events.

Regardless of whether the Sufi writer's fears and suspicions were justified or not, however, they expose some of the anxieties that were inherent to the way masculinity was experienced in Ottoman society in that period. To judge by the cuckoldry fines (*köftehorluk*) imposed by Ottoman criminal law, the cuckoldry anxiety expressed by Mıřrı was also shared by the society in which he lived. ⁽⁵⁵⁾ While from the viewpoint of the lawmakers the failure of a man to uphold the chastity of his household constituted an infringement of public as well as private honor, however, in his own take on the subject, Mıřrı turned the tables against the political authorities by accusing them of having divested him of his rightful patrimony. Similarly, Mıřrı's fear of and fantasies about his own rape reveal how closely linked in his mind were disempowerment and impotence, a link that is still in evidence today in the use of the word *ıktidar* in modern Turkish to mean both male sexual potency and political power. At the same time, Mıřrı's depiction of his enemies as "sodomites no comma!," must also be do not divide the world ! in the context of a heightened sensitivity about the cut! practice of pederasty among the Ottoman elites. ⁽⁵⁶⁾

In a number of places in his diary, the Sufi sheikh also interrupted the story of his days to comment directly on Ottoman politics. The political views he expressed exhibit at once interesting parallels to and differences from the mainstream political literature of the time. Like Ottoman statesmen and bureaucrats who authored tracts of political advice, the Hılveti master compared the present state of the Ottoman dynasty unfavorably with its past, critiqued the "injustices" (*zulm*) rampant in the Ottoman state and called for urgent reform. The reform envisioned by Mıřrı, nevertheless, could not be further from the reformist writers' project of restrengthening the Ottoman state: to replace the Ottoman dynasty with the Girays, who were the royal family of the Crimean Tatars and vassals of the Ottomans. ⁽⁵⁷⁾ Interestingly,

54. Rākım, *Vākı'ât*, 16-7, 91-2.

55. Uriel Heyd, *Studies in Old Ottoman Criminal Law*, ed. V.L. Ménage (Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1973), 57-8, 63, 96-7, 102 and Leslie Peirce, "She is trouble ... and I will divorce her"; Orality, honor, and representation in the Ottoman court of 'Aintab" in *Women in the Medieval Islamic World*, ed. Gavin R.G. Hambly (London: Macmillan, 1999), 269-300, especially 286-289.

56. Interestingly, such anti-pederasty sentiments were expressed both by and against the Kadızadelis. For Vāni Efendi's attempts to ban Ottoman grandees from taking young boy attendants on campaigns, see Chevalier d'Arvieux, *Mémoires du Chevalier d'Arvieux* (Paris, 1735), vol. 4, 390-5. For medieval Muslim perspectives on pederasty and other sexual "irregularities," see Everett K. Rowson, "The Categorization of Gender and Sexual Irregularity in Medieval Arabic Vice Lists" in *Body Guards: The Cultural Politics of Gender Ambiguity* (New York and London: Routledge, 1991), 50-79.

57. MKK, 2b, 12a, 48b-50a, 69a-b.

the same proposition would later be made by rebellious soldiers in 1688 and 1703.⁽⁵⁸⁾ According to Mıṣrî, the Ottomans had forfeited their right to rule because they had neither "justice" (*'adl*) nor "faith" (*dîn*). They were "outwardly Jewish" and "inwardly Hamzevî;" namely, they pretended to a strict observation of the religious law like the Jews, but were in private oblivious towards it like the "heretical" adherents of the Melâmi-Bayrâmi sheikh Hamza Bâli executed by imperial order in 1561-2.⁽⁵⁹⁾ They maltreated the *re'âyâ* and especially the *ẓimmîs*, the poor and the weakly, and exercised their punitive powers without a sense of proportion and clemency.⁽⁶⁰⁾

Mıṣrî also drew on an ancient and complex lore of eschatology and prophecy to express his political views as well as to make sense of his own predicament in the larger scheme of things. In particular, the stark dualism of good and evil, and of just and unjust inherent in eschatology proved useful to him as he sought to delegitimize his persecutors and to justify his own position of principled opposition to the Ottomans. Add to this the promise of both the stories of the prophets and of eschatological scenarios that persecution did not doom one's faith, and that ultimately the good and the just would be vindicated and the unjust defeated. However, vindication was not all that Mıṣrî found in these stories. Through them he also came to relocate himself in the religious economy of the world in which he lived and to see his banishments as a sign of his election to the highest spiritual ranks.

For Mıṣrî one of the signs of his divine election was his initiation into the hidden meanings of the letters (*'ilm-i esmâ-i ḥurûf*) and the divinatory techniques of *cifr* (A. *jafr*), a form of kabbalistic prognostication based on the numerical values of the Arabic alphabet. Even though some of the earlier writings of Mıṣrî also bear witness to his interest in kabbalistic prognostications, in his diary he presented his proficiency in the arts of esoteric interpretation as a grace of God that followed his imprisonment:

O tyrants (*ẓâlimler*), I, Mıṣrî, used to know neither *cifr* nor *'ilm-i esmâ-i ḥurûf*. When you imprisoned me and brought me to Boğazhisar [fortress in the Dardanelles], under the sway of a [spiritual] state I started perusing the books from the morning to the afternoon. When I came back to my senses, there were still chains around my neck and around my feet, but some of the [hidden] properties of the letters and the rules of *cifr* had [also] been revealed. Thanks be to God, from that day until now, day by day, [the disclosures] have continued."⁽⁶¹⁾

58. On the revolt of 1688, see Silâhdâr, *Tâ'riḥ* (Istanbul, 1928) vol. 2, 340; on the revolt of 1703, see Na'imâ, *Ta'riḥ* (Istanbul, 1864-5), vol. 6, addendum, 2-58; Cantemir, *The History of the Growth and Decay of the Ottoman Empire*, trans. N. Tindal (London, 1734), 15.

59. MKK, 8b, 13a. For a discussion of Mıṣrî's complex relations with the Bayrâmi-Melâmis, see my "Sufi and Dissident," 86-7, 271-2. The attribution of Jewishness to the Ottoman dynasty is further discussed below.

60. For a more detailed discussion of Mıṣrî's political views, see my "Sufi and dissident," 277-354.

61. MKK, 35b. For an earlier use of *cifr* by Mıṣrî, see chapter 50 of the *Mawâ'id* (74b-75b; trans. 117-118), written circa 1672-4.

These disclosures mattered tremendously to Mısrî not only because they were a continual proof of his high status in the divine realms and compensated for his powerlessness on earth, but also because they helped him to find meaning in a world that never failed to disappoint him. Through complex calculations based on the numerical values of the letters found in a selected text, typically a *Qur'ānic* verse or a passage from the '*Ankā Muğrib (Fabulous Gryphon)*' of Ibn 'Arabî, Mısrî tried to explain the "true" meaning of various incidents that took place around him, and to expose the plots hatched against his person. Some of the disclosures were of a conventionally political nature, and concerned events (typically, conspiracies) in the capital such as the presumed death of Sultan Mehmed IV, and the secret succession to the throne of his son Muştafâ, incidents which the Sufi sheikh believed were being concealed from the public. ⁽⁶²⁾

While Mısrî's kabbalistic prognostications basically remained earth-bound, the "divine revelations" (*vahy*, A. *wahy*) on which they were based pointed towards more heavenly spheres. The Sufi sheikh typically had these revelations around the time of the ritual prayer service in the mosque, while the imam was reciting the *Qur'ân*, while the crowd was being dispersed after prayers, or during the call to prayer itself. Only in one case Mısrî reported losing consciousness or becoming unsteady (*bî-ḳarâr oldum*) as a result of the experience; otherwise, he related the revelations as a regular feature of his life. ⁽⁶³⁾ He identified the bearer of the revelations as the archangel Gabriel, who had brought Muhammad the *Qur'ân*. The revelations themselves were all purely aural with the exception of one accompanied by a vision. Speaking "in the Turkish tongue" (*bi-lisân-ı Türkî*), Gabriel would give instructions about the *cifr* applications, or explain, sometimes directly to Mısrî and sometimes to "the people of the Book" (presumably Jews and Christians as well as Muslims) about the high spiritual rank that had been hoisted upon the Sufi writer. In these passages, Mısrî is called variously a "prophet" (*peygamber*, *nebî*) "messenger of God" (*resûlullâh*), "Jesus" and "Messiah," and it is made clear that while he was not given a new shariah or a new book, he was entrusted with the meaning of "the ambiguous verses (*âyât-i müteşâbihât*) of the great *Qur'ân*," a clear reference to his practice of *cifr*. ⁽⁶⁴⁾

The prophetic-eschatological passages in Mısrî's diary, if read literally, can be construed as going against the Islamic dogma that Muhammad was "the seal of the prophets" (*ḥatm al-anbiyâ*) and the last messenger of God. This is not, however, how Mısrî and most of his readers understood these revelations. They did not because they made sense of the revelations in the context of a centuries-long tradition of Sufi thought that accepted the finality of Muhammad's prophetic mission but also postulated the continuity of

62. Ibid., 6a, 61b.

63. Ibid, 4a, 7b, 11b, 15a, 30b, 41a, 42b, 50b-51b, 52b, 54a, 57b.

64. Ibid, 31a.

a form of prophecy in the person of the saints (*awliyā ullāh*, literally, friends of God).⁽⁶⁵⁾ It is true that conventionally the divine disclosures received by the saints were called *ilhāmāt* or “divine inspiration” to distinguish them from *wahy* or prophetic revelations proper. However, the theoretical distinctions made between “prophecy” and “divine inspiration” and between the “prophets” and the “saints” did not always hold in the language of *shaṭḥ*. Such transgressions of linguistic convention, moreover, were more than a matter of personal idiosyncrasy and constituted rather examples of what has been called a “rhetoric of sainthood,” a rhetoric which was more performative than descriptive. Examples of that rhetoric can also be found in other visionary autobiographies such as the *Kashf al-asrār*, written by the Persian mystic Rūzbihān Baqlī in the twelfth century. Like Mīṣrī, Rūzbihān also wrote of Gabriel addressing him in his own “Persian tongue” and calling him a “prophet” and a “messenger of God.” Whether or not Mīṣrī had actually read the *Kashf al-asrār*, which cannot be ascertained, the “rhetoric of sainthood” that suffused this text was clearly still well and alive in his time.⁽⁶⁶⁾

Over and above all, however, the one Sufi thinker to whose writings Mīṣrī made constant reference both in his diary and elsewhere was Ibn ‘Arabī, or as he was better known among the Ottoman Sufis, the Sheikh Akbar, the Greatest Master. Ibn ‘Arabī combined in his voluminous writings at once a deeply personal narrative of illumination and one of the most systematic expositions of Sufi metaphysics. His visionary writings had such an appeal for later Sufis that it has even been argued that they led to a certain closure, or homogenization in later Sufi literature.⁽⁶⁷⁾ A close analysis of the way Mīṣrī made use of Ibn ‘Arabī’s writings, however, indicates that while the Ottoman writer drew on the Sheikh Akbar’s hagiological script, he also personalized this script and adapted it to his own particular circumstances.

Particularly important in the context of Mīṣrī’s diary were Ibn ‘Arabī’s teachings about the relations between the saints and the prophets. Ibn ‘Arabī had argued that just as the saints inherited their spirituality from the prophets, particular saints inherited their spirituality from particular prophets. In this scheme, a Muslim could be a Christ-like or Christic (*‘isawī*) saint, if he inherited his spirituality from Christ, a Moses-like (*mū’sawī*) saint, if he inherited his spirituality from Moses, and so on. The highest rank of all, however, belonged to the Muhammadan saints, who inherited their spirituality directly from Muhammad. Finally, Ibn ‘Arabī postulated that just as legislative prophethood (*nubuwwa al-tashrī’*) had been sealed by Muhammad, so would sainthood be sealed by the “seal of the saints” (*ḥatm al-awliyā*). While the Andalusian writer was less than clear about the nature of that seal, and sometimes distinguished between several different seals of

65. Yohanan Friedmann, *Prophecy Continuous: Aspects of Ahmadi Religious Thought and Its Medieval Background* (Berkeley, L.A. and London: University of California Press, 1989), 49-93.

66. Ernst, *Ruzbihan Baqli*, 24-26.

67. Ernst, *Words of Ecstasy*, 22.

sainthood, it is generally accepted that he himself claimed to be the seal of the saints in one or more of those senses. ⁽⁶⁸⁾

The elliptical way in which Ibn 'Arabi wrote about the seal also enabled later Sufis to lay claim to the title, and redefine it in the process. Mişri was in good company, therefore, when he acknowledged the identity of the Sheikh Akbar as the "seal of the saints," but also considered that seal to be a spiritual rank that was held by different Sufis in different periods. ⁽⁶⁹⁾ Hence he wrote: "there is one seal of the saints at all times" and in this time, God ... made Mişri the seal of the saints." ⁽⁷⁰⁾ Since the seal of the saints was supposed to have inherited the spiritual stations of all the prophets, it also allowed Mişri to represent himself in terms of a rich prophetic typology.

The Sufi sheikh's experience of banishment and humiliation made him identify particularly with those prophets who had been the object of persecution. "My name is also Lot," wrote the Ḥalveti sheikh, "for they [the hirelings of the Ottoman sultan] are trying to sodomize (*livāṭa*) me." ⁽⁷¹⁾ As a persecuted man of God, he identified even more strongly with Jesus Christ, the epitome of a meek, gentle and seemingly submissive prophet. In his identification with Christ, Mişri went beyond the standard Muslim images of this prophet. While Muslim religious authorities had overwhelmingly denied that Christ had been crucified, Mişri referred multiple times to the crucifixion of Jesus as well as of his disciples "George, Zachariah, John and many others" as proof that persecution and martyrdom do not doom one's faith. In departure from the mainstream Muslim opinion, he also put the blame for the crucifixion of Jesus squarely on the Jews, whom he identified with his own Ottoman persecutors. ⁽⁷²⁾

Mişri was actually only one of many Sufis in the religiously syncretistic environment of Anatolia and the Balkans to draw on elements from other religions. ⁽⁷³⁾ In addition to Sufi precedents, these religious borrowings may have also owed something to the contacts the Sufi sheikh had with the Greek Orthodox both in Bursa and in the Greek-majority island of Lemnos. ⁽⁷⁴⁾

68. The standard work on Ibn 'Arabi's writings on sainthood and prophethood is Michel Chodkiewicz, *Seal of the Saints: Prophethood and Sainthood in the Doctrine of Ibn 'Arabi*, trans. Liadain Sherrard (Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 1993). For a recent study that postulates a link between Ibn 'Arabi's teachings on sainthood and Shiite eschatology, see Gerald Elmore, *Islamic Sainthood in the Fulness of Time: Ibn al-'Arabi's Book of the Fabulous Gryphon* (Leiden, Boston, Köln: Brill, 1999).

69. Chodkiewicz, *Seal of the Saints*, 134-7.

70. M KK, 6a.

71. Ibid, 60b-61a.

72. Ibid, 62b, 66b, 67b.

73. On "Christianizing Islam" among the Ottoman ulema and Sufis, see A.Y. Ocak, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Zındıklar ve Mülhidler*, 228-243. For the testimony of a 17th century English observer on a supposed secret sect of "the Chupmessahis" or "good followers of the Messiah" in the Ottoman palace and capital, see Sir Paul Rycout, *The Present State of the Ottoman Empire* (London, 1668), 129. The blatant Christian bias of the latter testimony, nevertheless, calls for a cautious reading.

74. The Ottoman Romanian historian Dimitrie Cantemir writes of having heard "from the mouth of the Patriarch of Constantinople, Callinicus" that Mişri befriended Callinicus when the latter was the Metropolitan of Bursa (*The History of the Growth and Decay of the Othman Empire*, trans. N. Tindal (London, 1734), vol. 2,

Yet, the peculiarly “Christianizing” statements in Mıṣrî’s diary were not simply an organic expression of a local culture, but rather represented what the Sufi sheikh chose to use out of a wide range of options available to him. It is tempting to think that Mıṣrî the self-identified Sufi-victim preferred Christian traditions about Jesus Christ over Muslim ones precisely because suffering was more central to the former. Of course, this choice would also have been part of Mıṣrî’s “performance” as “Christ” and in keeping with the “rhetoric of sainthood,” which owed its effectiveness at least in part to its ability to break with doctrinal conventions.

The Christian narratives that accused the Jews of the crucifixion of Christ also served the Sufi sheikh well in his effort to delegitimize the ruling Ottoman house on the grounds of religion. The present line of the Ottoman house, the Sufi sheikh argued, no longer adhered to the Muslim faith, but had been converted by Vānî into Judaism.⁽⁷⁵⁾ This is an intriguing assertion that can be read on at least three different levels: (1) as a basically self-referential claim, linking Mıṣrî’s fate with that of Christ, (2) as a judgment on the puritanical form of Islam espoused by Vānî and the Kadızadelis, likening it to the perceivedly stricter laws of the Jews that had been abrogated by Muhammad,⁽⁷⁶⁾ and (3) as a veiled criticism of the role played by Vānî Efendi in the controversial conversion of the Jewish messiah Sabbatai Zvi and some of his followers in 1666.⁽⁷⁷⁾

Of course, insofar as he took an oppositional stance against the Ottomans, Mıṣrî was not really a quietist, submissive Sufi. In this regard he found a powerful model in the figure of Jesus Christ in his second coming as the Messiah: according to Muslim as well as Christian eschatology, upon his second coming to the world, the Messiah would no longer be meek and gentle as he was on his first, and would enter into a full-blown fight with and defeat the Antichrist, symbolizing the forces of the unjust. While Mıṣrî could designate any number of his enemies and rivals as the Antichrist, he

(*suite de la note 74*) 386-7). While the reliability of Cantemir’s account may be doubted, it is rather more difficult to dismiss outright Mıṣrî’s own account about visits paid to him by Greek Orthodox monks from the island of Imbros as well as by a Greek layman named Maslaki while in Lemnos (İstanbul Üniversitesi Ktp., T.Y. 6374, 37a).

75. MKK, 61a-b, 62b.

76. On Muslim views of the Mosaic law in the medieval period, see Camilla Adang, *Muslim writers on Judaism and the Hebrew Bible: from Ibn Rabbân to Ibn Haṣm* (Leiden, N.Y., Köln: Brill, 1996), 192-222. For a more general discussion of Muslim perceptions of the Jews, see Bernard Lewis, *The Jews of Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

77. The classic work on Sabbatai Zvi is Gershom Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi: The Mystical Messiah, 1626-1676*, tr. R.J.Z. Verblowsky, Bollingen Series 93 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973). For the Ottoman background and especially the involvement of Vānî Efendi in the affair, see Zilfi, *Politics of Piety*, 153-156; Jane Hathaway, “The grand vizier and the false messiah: The Sabbatai Sevi controversy and the Ottoman reform in Egypt,” *JAOS* 4 (1997): 665-671 and Marc David Baer, “17. yüzyılda Yahudilerin Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’ndaki nüfuz ve mevkilerini yitirmeleri,” *Toplum ve Bilim* 83 (Kış 1999/2000): 202-222. For spurious Sabbatian traditions linking Mıṣrî and Sabbatai, see Paul B. Fenton, “Shabbatai Sebi and his Muslim contemporary Muhammad an-Niyazi” in *Approaches to Judaism in Medieval Times*, ed. David R. Blumenthal (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1988), vol. 3, 81-88.

naturally saw the Kadızadeli leader Vānî Efendi as the prime candidate. Likewise, he warned his Ottoman persecutors that if they killed him (Mısrî), as they no doubt were planning to do, they would meet their end in the hands of the “Franks,” who being adherents of Christ, would come to Mısrî’s revenge, vanquish the evildoers and adhere by the shariah of Muhammad. It is telling that Mısrî delegated the duty of revenge to the Franks, for he was of course all too aware that he himself had no chance of undertaking armed rebellion against the Ottoman authorities. This also meant that his self-identity as the Messiah (or the Mahdi) ⁽⁷⁸⁾ was bound to be partial, representing at best that part of himself that was defiant and confrontational, and one might even add, hopeful.

One prophetic prototype that captures a good deal of the complexity of the Sufi sheikh’s self-image, finally, was Adam. Within Ibn ‘Arabi’s prophetological scheme Adam held a privileged place as the first man, the first prophet and the prototypical Perfect Man (*al-insân al-kâmil*), Ibn ‘Arabi as well as later Sufis in his school further drew links between Adam, Christ and Muhammad as the three prophets in whom the all-comprehensive name of God, “Allah,” became most fully manifest. However, Adam was also distinctive as the most “material” of these prophets, having been created not only “in the image of God” but also “out of water and clay.” ⁽⁷⁹⁾

This polarity in the Adamic prototype served Mısrî well when he tried to make sense of the conflicting aspects of his own existence. On the one hand, the Sufi sheikh identified with Adam the prophet to whom God had revealed the divine names, and found therein a significant parallel to his own preoccupation with esoteric exegesis and kabbalistic prognostications. On the other hand, the very human dimension of Adam enabled Mısrî to answer a number of difficult questions about his own claim to prophethood: “O Mısrî, you say I am a prophet (*peygamber*). Which of the prophets has cursed like you? The curses of the rabble have been sealed in you.” To this self-posed question, the Sufi sheikh answered by explaining just what it means to “be” or “become Adam,” which in Turkish also means to “be human”:

When I become Adam/human, all the pure ones stand on my right side – they are the ones who demand advice (*naşâ’ih*), gnosis (*ma’ârif*), [and] knowledge of the unknown (*‘ulûm-i ledüniyye*); they demand it through their *a’yân* [entities or notables] and I say it for their sake; - and all the bandits (*eşkiyâ*) stand on my left side – they are the ones who demand curses (*sûtümler*), blasphemy (*küfür*), sinful

78. Compared to the Messiah, the Mahdi plays only a secondary role in Mısrî’s eschatological scenarios in his diary (MKK, 67b), but is more prominent in his poems from the same period (Mısrî, *Divan*, ed. Kenan Erdoğan, (Ankara : Akçağ, 1998), 62, 216).

79. On Adam’s prevailing “materiality,” see the commentary in Ahmed Avni Konuk, *Fusûsu’l-Hikem Terçüme ve Şerhi*, edited and transcribed with an introduction by Mustafa Tahralı and Selçuk Eraydın (İstanbul: M.Ü. İlahiyat Fakültesi Yayınları, 1989-1992), vol. 3, 131.

acts (*fisk*), ignorance (*cehl*), madness (*tecennün*) and coition (*hufi*).⁽⁸⁰⁾

Iconographically, this image of Mısrî as Adam, with its strong symbolism of left and right, can be traced to a Christic vision of Adam described by Ibn 'Arabi.⁽⁸¹⁾ In the most general sense, both images provided a commentary on the relationship of God to humanity as well as the relationship of the Perfect Man to God and humanity. In addition, Mısrî may have hinted at a parallel relationship between the sovereign and his subjects through his use of the word "*a'yân*," which could denote both the Platonic "immutable entities" appropriated into Sufi metaphysics and the "urban notables," who had emerged as a crucial force in Ottoman politics in the late seventeenth century. Clearly, however, any royal association the image had was subordinated to its religious significance as an image of the Perfect Man, the axis mundi, the hidden sovereign.

Finally, Mısrî thoroughly personalized this image of the Perfect Man by investing him with his very own positive and negative qualities. Indeed, as his diary bears witness better than any other text, the Sufi sheikh in exile continued to give the people around him words of "advice," and share with them what he had received by way of "gnosis" and "knowledge of the unknown," but he also cursed, blasphemed, talked a great deal about sexual deprivation and various sexual violations, occasionally blundered in his prognostications, and wondered whether he could possibly be "mad" (*mecnûn*) as some of his critics thought he was.⁽⁸²⁾ What is truly novel about Mısrî's self-image as Adam, then, is that while it elevates the Sufi sheikh to the position of the Perfect Man and the sovereign-like axis mundi, it does so without losing sight of his particularities, imperfections and inner tensions.

In Burckhardtian analyses of life writing, typology, like all forms of analogy, has characteristically been seen as a somewhat deficient mode of self-representation, preventing a full exploration of one's individuality.⁽⁸³⁾ Yet as Mısrî's use of Ibn 'Arabi's prophetology illustrates, typology as a mode of self-representation could actually accommodate a great deal of variety, inconsistency and contradiction. In Mısrî's case, what made this possible was not just the variety of prophetic prototypes available in Ibn 'Arabi's model, but also the ambiguity of the Ottoman writer's identification with

80. MKK, 34b-35a.

81. Stephen Hirtenstein, *The Unlimited Mercifier: The spiritual life and thought of Ibn 'Arabi* (Oxford and Ashland, Oregon: Anqa Publishing and White Cloud Press, 1999), 118-121.

82. On the possibility of his madness, see MKK, 63b-64a, 80b.

83. On typological autobiographies in early modern Europe, E. Pearlman, "Typological Autobiography in Seventeenth-Century England," *Biography* 8, 2 (Spring 1985): 95-118. For an insightful discussion of the use of another highly complex typological system, astrology, as a mode of self-representation during the Renaissance, see Anthony Grafton, *Cardano's Cosmos: The Worlds and Works of a Renaissance Astrologer* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 178-198.

these prototypes. Throughout his diary, Mıṣrî switched back and forth both between different prophetic prototypes, and between these prototypes and the persona he called "this black-faced [or "mouse faced"] Mıṣrî." In this connection, strategic shifts from the first person voice to the third person as well as the question-and-answer format, in which the Sufi sheikh served as his own inquisitor, proved useful in containing (but never really eliminating) the various inconsistencies and contradictions in his representational scheme.

But did the discrepancies between this ideal scheme and worldly realities ever make Mıṣrî doubt the basic premises of this ideal scheme? There is one passage in the diary that raises this question. The Sufi sheikh wrote this passage after one of his "revelations" had turned out to be wrong. In it, he basically reproaches God for having been "tyrannical (*zâlim*) towards me, and lowly, poor ... and weak towards the Deccâl" (Antichrist) and for having "made me a paraiah (*parya*)." After observing that Deccâl's servants are doing better than God's, he concludes with the following diatribe:

God, may Deccâl be your misfortune and the misfortune of those who have become slaves to you. You have a name only in the hearts. Let that be forgotten, too, let it be eradicated from the hearts. Tyrant, you are existent in name, nonexistent in body (*mev'ûdü'l-cism*); perhaps the nonexistent in essence (*ma'dümü'z-zât*) is also you. You do not exist (*yoksun*). To whom should I cry out and complain? These words are also absurd (*'abeş*). Whatever I say to the nonexistent is absurd, absurd, absurd. ⁽⁸⁴⁾

This, it is important to point out, was by no means a profession of unbelief in the modern sense, ⁽⁸⁵⁾ for if it were, it would be impossible to explain how the Sufi sheikh could carry on with his usual pious routines on subsequent days. Rather, Mıṣrî's "absurd" discourse here seems closer in spirit to the lover's quarrel with God, which was actually an old topos in Sufi literature. ⁽⁸⁶⁾ In other words, it was again rhetorics drawn from the religiomystical tradition that came to Mıṣrî's aid in his struggle to make sense of a world that increasingly seemed fractured and in flux.

84. MKK, 57b.

85 While this topic has yet to be explored in Ottoman historiography, there is a rich literature on the possibility (or impossibility) of unbelief in early modern Europe. To sample, see Lucien Febvre, *The Problem of Unbelief in the Sixteenth Century: The Religion of Rabelais*, trans. Beatrice Gottlieb (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1982); Wootton, "Lucien Febvre and the Problem of Unbelief in the Early Modern Period," *Journal of Modern History* 60 (1988): 695-730; John Edwards, "Religious Faith and Doubt in Late Medieval Spain: Soria circa 1450-1500," *Past and Present* 120 (1988)§ 3-25; C.J. Somerville, "Debate: Religious Faith, Doubt and Atheism," and John Edwards, "Reply," *Past and Present* 128 (August 1990): 152-161; C.A. Kors, *Atheism in France, 1650-1729*, vol. 1: *The Orthodox Sources of Disbelief* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

86. Hellmut Ritter, "Muslim Mystics Strife with God," *Oriens* 5 (1952): 1-15. For examples of disputatious poems by Kızılbaş-Alevî and Bektashi poets, see A. Gölpınarlı, *Alevî Bektaşî Nefesleri* (İstanbul: İnkılap, 1992), 213 and İsmail Özmen, *Alevî-Bektaşî Şiirleri*

All in all, however, it will perhaps have to remain an open question to what extent Mısrî came to an understanding with himself, and to what extent the various religious and political paradigms he employed explained the world to him satisfactorily. At least the incessant way in which he presented proof after proof of his various convictions in his diary suggests that none of these proofs ultimately satisfied him. This indeterminacy, this simultaneous deficiency and excess of meaning, is actually one of the most striking features of Mısrî's diary and sets it apart from the mainstream of first-person writing in Sufi circles both before and in his own time. It is also paradoxically what makes it very much a "mirror" (even if a "distorting mirror") of its "early modern" times.

While people in the early modern era experienced no disjuncture comparable to that of their nineteenth and twentieth-century counterparts, they nevertheless lived in an age that saw such profound and interrelated changes as the growth of trade, urbanization, the emergence of bureaucratic states and intensified social and political conflicts.⁽⁸⁷⁾ Even if these changes did not always bring about a complete overhaul of old ways of thinking, they certainly added to the strain already present in the old models, and made early modern people a good deal more "anxious" than their medieval counterparts.⁽⁸⁸⁾ As recent studies have argued, these changes and the anxieties they provoked also had much to do with the new attention people paid to themselves, or the prevalence of "self-fashioning" in early modern Europe.⁽⁸⁹⁾ This is an insightful proposition that might also help explain the growing complexity of the forms of self-representation used by the Ottoman Sufis.

To be sure, few Ottoman contemporaries of Mısrî exhibited the same degree of anxiety in their personal writings; however, they did address many of the concerns that surface in Mısrî's diary in other venues. To recapitulate, these concerns covered a wide range from questions about the strength and legitimacy of the Ottoman state, which especially preoccupied the "ruling" elites, to cuckoldry anxiety that plagued elite and commoner alike. The list can be further extended with questions about the proper relationship

87. On the interconnections between different parts of the world in the early modern era, see the articles in the issue devoted to "Early Modernities" in *Daedalus*, 127, 3 (Summer 1998); Joseph Fletcher, "Integrative History: Parallels and Interconnections in the Early Modern Period, 1500-1800," *Journal of Turkish Studies* 9 (1985): 37-57; Jack Goldstone, "East and West in the Seventeenth Century: Political Crises in Stuart England, Ottoman Turkey, and Ming China," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 30 (1988): 103-142; Niels Steensgaard, "The Seventeenth-Century Crisis and the Unity of Eurasian History," *Modern Asian Studies* 24, 4 (1990): 683-697; and John E. Wills, *1688: A Global History* (N.Y. and London: Norton, 2001).

88. On "anxiety" in early modern European culture see William J. Bouwsma, "Anxiety and the Formation of Early Modern Culture" in Barbara C. Malament, ed., *After the Reformation: Essays in Honor of J.H. Hexter* (Philadelphia, 1980), 215-246; on masculinity-related anxieties in early modern Europe, see Mark Breitenberg, *Anxious masculinity in early modern England* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

89. Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1980); for a "literary historical" approach to the same question, see Marshall Grossman, *The Story of All Things: Writing the Self in English Renaissance Narrative Poetry* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1998).

between Muslims and non-Muslims, between the center and the periphery, between political and religious authorities (a topic of great relevance in the context of the Kadızadeli controversy), and last but not least between the earth and the heavens.

It is perhaps this last question that is the most relevant for understanding both the peculiar nature of Mısrî's diary, and the shift that took place in the modes of self-representation in Sufi narratives in this period. Above, it was suggested that the temporal and the mundane entered Sufi personal narratives, as the Sufis became progressively more integrated into the social, political and economic structures of "this world." Significantly, however, this new tendency was not accompanied by a "disenchantment of the world" such as has been posited for early modern Europe.⁽⁹⁰⁾ In fact, the blurred boundaries between the earth and the heavens may even have made the everyday life of mystics like Mısrî more enchanted than ever. This is perhaps best reflected in his diary, which is neither a completely this-world-oriented text like the diary of his contemporary and fellow Hâlvî Seyyid Hasan nor a text oriented towards the "other world" like the spiritual autobiographies of many earlier and contemporaneous writers. Rather, it negotiates between the two worlds as a text written in dire (worldly) circumstances to find a heavenly explanation and redemption for those circumstances. As such, it also reflects the anxieties that beset practitioners of Sufism in an era when beliefs in the efficacy of prayers for the state as well as in the "invisible saints" and "hidden marvels" came under question by the Kadızadeli. That these beliefs were not discarded then and there should not blind us to the importance of the questions that were raised about them and to the novelty of Mısrî's very own response to those questions.

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90. For studies that employ this paradigm for early modern Europe, see Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (N.Y.: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971); Marcel Gauchet, *The disenchantment of the world: A political history of religion*, trans. Oscar Burge (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997); for a more nuanced exploration of the same paradigm in the context of early modern New England, see David D. Hall, *Worlds of Wonder; Days of Judgment: Popular Religious Belief in Early New England* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989).